

IN THE CLAIMS

The text of all claims under examination is submitted, and the status of each is identified. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended): A process of dewatering an aqueous suspension in which the aqueous suspension is sewage sludge comprising

a) dosing the suspension with a flocculating amount of a first flocculant in which the first flocculant is a cationic organic polymer to form a thickened suspension ~~and~~,

b) adding and mixing into the thickened suspension formed in step a) a dewatering amount of a second flocculant in which the second flocculant is a cationic polymer having an intrinsic viscosity of at least 3 dl/g,

~~and~~

c) subjecting the thickened suspension to mechanical dewatering to form a cake, characterised in that the second flocculant of step b) comprises a water-soluble or water swellable polymer that is mixed into the suspension in the form of (i) substantially dry polymer particles or (ii) an aqueous composition comprising dissolved or hydrated polymer having a polymer concentration of at least 2% by weight ~~and having an intrinsic viscosity of at least 3 dl/g.~~

2. (cancelled).

3. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the mechanical dewatering employs an apparatus selected from the group consisting of belt press, filter press, screw press and centrifuge.

4. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant is in the form of an aqueous composition comprising dissolved or hydrated polymer having a polymer concentration between 2 and 5% by weight.

5. (cancelled).

6. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant is formed from at least 30% by weight cationic monomer or monomers.

7. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant is selected from the group consisting of cationic polyacrylamides, polymers of dialkyl diallyl ammonium chloride, dialkyl amino alkyl (meth) -acrylates (or salts thereof) and dialkyl amino alkyl (meth)-acrylamides (or salts thereof).

8. (cancelled).

9. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant is selected from the group consisting of,

i) a polymer formed from 50 to 100% by weight methyl chloride quaternary ammonium salt of dimethyl amino ethyl (meth) acrylate and 0 to 50% by weight acrylamide of intrinsic viscosity between 4 and 10 dl/g,

iii) quaternised salts of Mannich addition polyacrylamides of intrinsic viscosity of at least 4 dl/g.

10. (cancelled).

11. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the first flocculant is selected from the group consisting of acrylamide polymers, polyvinyl amidine, polyvinyl amine, poly dimethyl diallyl ammonium chloride, poly amines, polyethyleneimines, mannich polyacrylamides and quaternised mannich polyacrylamides.

12. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant is introduced into the suspension in form of a slurry in a liquid.

13. (original): A process according to claim 12 in which the liquid is polyethylene glycol.

14. (previously presented): A process according claim 1 in which the second flocculant has an intrinsic viscosity of at least 4 to 10 dl/g.

15. (new): A process according to claim 1 in which the substantially dry particles have a diameter of at least 50 microns.

16. (new): A process according to claim 15 in which the substantially dry particles have a diameter from 50 and 1000 microns.

17. (new): A process according to claim 1 in which the mixing of the second flocculant in step b) is carried out using suitable mixing equipment.